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# The Journal of Practical Metaphysics

DEVOTED TO

THE UNIFICATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND SPIRITUAL THOUGHT

AND THE

NEW PHILOSOPHY OF HEALTH.

HORATIO W. DRESSER, Editor.

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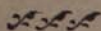
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THE PROBLEM OF LIFE.\*

BY HORATIO W. DRESSER.

I ASK you to consider with me this afternoon the old, old problem — life, that strangely beautiful assemblage of forces, joys, sorrows, surprises, doubts and victories which each of us meets and thinks upon in his own way, is baffled by, again and again thrown in restless skepticism or apparent defeat, yet ever with renewed interest to master and publish its secret. The great problem has been variously stated, and is probably suggested to each observer in different terms. To some the question comes forcibly, Is life worth living at all? For many the matter resolves itself into this, Must we take life as we find it and passively accept circumstances as they come? Or, if we conclude that man is an active agent in life's evolution, how are we to play our part most successfully, that is, with the least friction and the fullest measure of altruism? How may I attain the greatest amount of happiness or mass the most wealth? some might ask; while the philosopher asks, What is life for? and his interest is usually intellectual or technical, with little or no regard for practical life.

The thesis which I shall maintain in this paper is that for all

\* A paper read before the Circle of Divine Ministry, New York City, March, 1898.



these aspects of life's problem there is but one adequate solution. The way to know whether life be worth living is first of all to live it in its fullest sense. The way to be happy or spiritual is not to seek happiness or spirituality alone, but to round out on all sides of human character. The philosopher shall not understand the laws which govern the universe; he cannot interpret its beauty and meaning by sitting apart and observing life's changeless play. In order to comprehend its harmony he must himself become in harmony with it, since to know means first of all to live, then to rationalize one's own life. *A priori* reasoning is likely to lead one astray. We may *think* we know what life will be before we live it; we may construct many beautiful theories. But the one test alike of faith and of theory is *experience*. Hence to know what beauty is, what love is, what the Christ is, man must himself become beautiful, he must love, he must fashion his conduct after the Christ ideal. The richest experience shall then give birth to the truest theory, and he only shall be competent to speak whose life exemplifies the truth he utters. There is no solution of life's problem short of this, either in its intellectual or its practical aspects.

It is a problem which must be worked out through actual life carried to its ultimate stage, where each soul has lived, suffered, overcome, thought and been perfected, until, true to the universal will, and strong on all sides of his nature, word, deed, head, heart and hand shall tell the same beautifully consistent story.

The starting point is, take ourselves as we exist today and begin to work out this grand ideal as applied to our particular mind and heart, to begin first with knowledge of one's own higher and lower nature. Since the key to the solution of life's problem at large and the mystery of evil lies in the interpretation of one's own mind, in the understanding of error, suffering and sin, so far as these are manifested in individual experience.

Our situation in life is somewhat like this: We awake to consciousness to find ourselves played upon by a universe of

forces which we did not make. Irresistibly, as the tide rolls in upon a sandy shore, the incoming stream of sensation is brought constantly before the mind. How marvelous is this flow of the great river of consciousness, bearing into the inner world where the soul sits in contemplation its changing interplay of pains and pleasures, the frivolities and shows of the world, its joys, its strifes and crimes, its sympathies, its eccentricities and its tales of heroism! How remarkable, too, is the endlessly varying play of thought and emotion aroused by the panorama we call the world! The soul sits in wonder, or in despair and doubt, long before it can begin to see any meaning in this great process of interaction between the world without and the mind within. We are clearly left in ignorance, not only of the reason why we are here, but of the best way to live. Evidently the Power that put us here loves us with a devotion so great that he is willing even to let us suffer that we may each know from actual experience what life is, how best to live it, and what it means. Yet despite our ignorance, despite our suffering, one fact stands out clearly from the moment we begin seriously to think. We desire to win freedom from pain, to find happiness and peace. The discovery that we are ignorant prompts the longing to know. The very mystery of existence arouses an unquenchable desire to wrench from life its secret; and almost before we are aware of it, we have become philosophical, we have made of life a problem which we have set ourselves to solve, though it take eternity.

Each one of you would, I suspect, make the same confession if questioned in regard to your special problem. Here you are, living and thinking amidst this great interplay of forces which carry you ceaselessly forward. Sometimes you halt or faint by the way. Again and again life seems burdensome, and you would gladly drop the cares of maturity and return to the unconsciousness of childhood. But a superior power bears you resistlessly onward, and if you do not move on good-naturedly you are made to feel the sharp spur of necessity. With each

of you, too, this power takes an individual turn, and herein consists your problem. There is in each a weak or undeveloped side. Around this undeveloped part of you all your trials and pains centre, and the question is, How can your weakness become your strength? What is the superior power trying to accomplish through this unfinished portion of your life?

For example, let us take a man of an exceedingly sensitive temperament. He is finely organized, his aspirations are toward the spiritual life; he is kind, thoughtful, affectionate, and morally upright and strong. But with it all he is extremely susceptible to outside influences, and these influences do not always take the highest form, for beside his spiritual nature he possesses a strongly marked lower or animal nature. Here is the great mystery. Why is it that side by side with the will to do right and become spiritual there is a nature which his will apparently cannot conquer, but is highly rebellious? And why is it that he is so easily influenced on the lower plane, while for every higher attainment he must pay a heavy price?

Is this not a fair statement of life's problem — the conflict of two selves in us, what to do with the weak side, the undeveloped side, the animal in us, and how to adjust ourselves to the forces of evolution so that we shall be receptive only to the highest? For if you search deeply enough, can you not trace disease, sin, crime, evil, back of their superficial effects to this undeveloped nature, where their real cause is located? Or let us be frank for once and confess that misdirected power or *selfishness* is really the root and basis of it all. The vital problem, then, is, How shall selfishness be overcome in the world? For every problem at last centres about this. This difficulty lies back of all questions of moral, social and political reform; the problems of wealth and poverty, of war, sin and crime, yes, it is also the real question at issue in disease, in every form of suffering. This is the great obstacle put between man and the realization of the Christ ideal. This it is which he must overcome, and by paying this tremendous price earn the right to be

at peace, to be happy, to know the meaning of life. And since all problems reduce themselves to this, all time spent upon other solutions is to a certain extent wasted until man attacks this central issue of life and philosophy; for if the philosopher in his garret has failed to solve life's problem, if it be still a mystery to the invalid and the financier, here is the one real reason, that self still stands in the way.

My proposition, then, is that the universe is ultimately a harmony; that a divinely, beneficent and all-wise Power is its origin and its life, and that each of us stands for a particular phase or manifestation of this great Power or Life. But that each is given just this weak side and this great bulk of ignorance leading to misery and selfishness that he may have fullest experience, that this divine ideal may have the opportunity to unfold, that we may become strong through contest, and beautiful through victory.

This is no new proposition, you say, and you think I am about to weary you with a restatement of some time-worn theory. But, old or new, people show by their conduct that they are not yet ready to try this solution; for they are still trying to patch up and remedy effects, they still blame one another instead of looking to their own natures as the cause of their trouble, they continually attribute their misery to God. Or they expect to win salvation by mere belief, or to solve the mystery of life by simply thinking about it, to the neglect of real living. But I maintain that the essentials of the only correct solution are just these tryingly personal experiences which we strive to get free from. The man who is easily influenced is each day meeting just such difficulties as afford him the best food for philosophical thinking. The remedy is to *think*, to understand one's *self*, and to overcome the selfishness of the world by first of all becoming unselfish one's self. Moreover, it is evident that one's perplexing personal problems will continue until it be understood, the weak side strengthened, the undeveloped side evolved and self overcome. This is the solu-



tion of the mystery. This is why the animal in us survives so long, because if it did not we would not learn our lesson.

Deeply planted within each of us the seed of wisdom lies, the seeds of virtue and happiness. But they are to be known and prized only through experience with their opposites, since we learn by comparison or contrast. Thus life from first to last is a contention between higher and lower. It means not only the development of character, but the discipline of the understanding. It is the arrangement of a Power so wise that every detail is an adjustment of means to ends. Your own individual aspirations are numbered among these means. Your own deepest prompting, your own most trying problem has a life in it which shall lead you infallibly to perfection, to wisdom, to harmony and peace. What, then, is the motive power behind all these conditions, this selfishness, misery, happiness and varied experiences through which we evolve into wisdom and virtue? It seems to me to be the real ego soul. Each soul goes forth from the great creative life, freighted with possibilities of thought and action. Each soul not only has its individual message to give, but it has the power to attract the conditions essential to full self-expression. It is literally and truly sent out into the dark world of ignorance and trial, with a latent Christ locked far within. It is destined to press through all that lies in its way, and no power can withstand it. It is a centre of life, a centre of force, a mere seed if you will, but as such a mighty magnet to draw to it whatever it needs along the path of life.

Thus equipped, it goes forth and attracts the parentage and external environment necessary to the fulfilment of the creative purpose. It may or may not have successive incarnations. On this point our knowledge of the soul's history is still obscure. I am laying stress rather on the process. As we exist here today we find just these two factors, the soul and its circumstances. All growth proceeds from a centre outward. Essential to growth is a favorable environment. The soul is like the



life latent in a rosebud, pressing outward to become the full-blown flower. The warm rays of the sun meet the flower from without and enable it to come forth. Throughout the history of thought authorities have been divided as to which was the reality, the external conditions of the mind or the life manifested through them. Some say, Work upon effects and the inner life will express itself. Others say, Assume the right attitude within and the outer circumstances will change. I am trying to show that both sides are essential, that we may unfold from within and cooperate from without; that it is not enough to have a large soul and a poorly-developed body, but that rounded out, physical and intellectual, moral and social development is essential to the full expression of the soul, for if man is to come into harmony with the universe the union must be physical as well as mental; and a well-developed body makes this possible. Consequently the man to become unselfish is not to sacrifice, but to develop self. God has sent each of us here for a purpose. In order to express that purpose one must have individual cultivation. That purpose is consistent with all-creative work. So that when I am most fully myself, I shall be of greatest service to society. There is no conflict, therefore, in the last analysis between self and society. The power of selfishness in the world is the power of individual service in course of evolution. It is all good in itself. There is nothing evil in itself; but each and every soul is seeking its balance, each is trying to learn how to live so as to be true to self and to others.

The problem of life, then, is not to be taken as a burden to be pondered over with seriousness and doubt. It is to be taken as a blessing and a privilege, as much as to say: Here I am existing in this wonderful universe of law and order. I am needed, otherwise I should not be here. There is but one power in the universe, nothing can defeat my work. I am *fated* to master, to accomplish, to live out my fullest life. The friction I feel is due to the effort of the soul to come forth to freedom. I am

still conscious of friction because my will is not yet in harmony with the universal will. But I am sure to conquer. I will trust, I will be faithful and patient because I see the law, because I *know* as inevitably as the apple falls when it is loosened from the tree, my soul will draw to it the conditions requisite for its growth.

If, then, a superior wisdom presides over events and adjusts all means to one supreme end, it follows that just these conditions in which we find ourselves placed, just these problems which seem so hard have not only come to us in wisdom, but in response to our own attitude. If we rebel against them, if we throw the blame on others, and do not try to think or develop, then we remain where we are without learning our lesson, still in ignorance and misery. But if we understand the law, then all is plain.

What is the law which regulates the entire world of human conduct? It is obviously that of action and reaction. "As a man soweth, so shall he also reap." Here is the basis of all our activity. Ignorantly or consciously, our own attitude and our own acts draw to us their like. If we return anger for anger we must take the consequences. If we worry we must expect to be miserable, but if we love we may be assured that others will love us. Is this not, then, the essence of Jesus' teaching? Is it not the substance of all common-sense moral and spiritual development? Is it not the lesson of our entire human experience, the substance of the teaching of all the ages? If so, if life is law-governed, then in the last analysis experience consists of a series of opportunities which one may take or lose. We mount higher in the scale of life by our own acts only, by the occasions we take to do good, to strike the note of harmony, to love. All that is demanded of us that our individual problems may be solved is that we shall choose the wisest way, that of two movings we shall choose the one which makes for character and service, the disinterested guidance, the higher promptings. Let us, then, take home these principles and see how they apply

in daily life. Suppose the case is that of a woman who is compelled to do her own work, but the work is irksome to her; she aspires to better things. Shall she try to break off from it just when it is most irksome? No, say all who view life from the point of view of character building. That is a part of her problem. If she were to break herself free from it when it seemed irksome, she might have it all to go through again. It is just at this hardest point that it will do her the greatest good. The open door to a higher work is contentment with the task at hand, while still keeping in mind the higher ideal. No work will be given to do except that which is needed for moral and social development. We have what we deserve, for the law of action and reaction ultimately means that justice reigns at the heart of things. If we hold the ideal in mind, we may know with absolute surety that the conditions favorable to its realization will come just at that moment when we are ready—*never before*, for we can omit no step in evolution.

Again, suppose the problem is that of domestic inharmony. Here surely is a splendid opportunity, for the place in which to work out a problem so that it shall mean most for the soul and the understanding is of course the place where the problem arises. One cannot run away from one's problem. It will pursue one to Europe. It insists upon just the solution which you alone can give it. If there be inharmony in the family life the trouble, so far as one is personally concerned in it, is in one's own nature. The opportunity is open to make things harmonious, to learn one's lesson which just that trying situation offers. And usually half of the problem is solved when we cease to blame others, when we remedy our own attitude; for it is not the work we do, it is not the environment in which we are placed, which makes for character, nor is it what others do for us. It is the way we take our circumstances. And "no change of circumstances can repair a defect of character." "The problem of life," says David Starr Jordan, "is not to make life easier, but to make men stronger. The essence of



tyranny lies not in the strong, but in the weakness of the weak." If I am down-trodden, and my individuality is held in subjection, I must blame myself for submitting. "Only thyself, thyself canst harm." The sensitive man who suffers from the unkind remarks of others and the contamination of mental atmospheres, must learn that his own nature is to blame. The one who rebels must see the wisdom of just that circumstance at which he rebels. If circumstances do not change at once, there is some good reason why. The important point is to *think*, to take ourselves just where we are and try to understand the principle involved, to come to judgment and discover how far we are advanced in mental evolution, how we have built up character by the way we have taken circumstances, and how the mind has been developed thought by thought.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



The saying of Emerson, that "society is a conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members," is particularly applicable to the subject of truth-telling. Society's ways are such as to render frankness well-nigh impossible. People ever give surfaces to one another. The petty deceits of the formally polite are so numerous as to lead the genuine truth-seeker to give up almost in despair. One is at last inclined to accept without reserve the saying that "language is given us to conceal thought." The more skilled in the use of language, the more easily does one compel words to say more or less than one means.

In the great Sanskrit epic, the Mahabharata, the story is told how the hero Yudhishthira, when asked by Dharma to tell what was the most wonderful thing in the world, replied that it was the persistent belief of mankind in their own deathlessness in spite of their witnessing death everywhere around them almost every moment of their lives.

## SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

BY FRANK H. SPRAGUE.

EVERY man sees such things as he sees because he has reached just the stage of development in consciousness which makes it inevitable that the ultimate Reality or Essence of things should appear to him in such a fashion, under precisely those forms, endowed with exactly those qualities and attributes which he recognizes, and not because the phenomena he perceives have an absolute, objective existence, apart from his thought.

If one's world is of the material sort, it is because his mind is so imbued with that quality of thought that everything must appear to him in that guise, and not because anything possesses, independent of his thought, the material value he ascribes to it. Every change in consciousness on the part of the observer causes the aspect of things perceived by him externally to change correspondingly. If, then, one wishes to improve his world, which ordinarily seems firmly established outwardly according to inexorable laws, he holds the key to its transformation within himself. It is only necessary to cultivate a different sort of consciousness; and the degree in which he has acquired the habit of effecting internal changes of this kind determines his mastery over things external. This fact is absolutely true, in every relation of life. There are not two distinct kinds of world—material and spiritual; these terms simply signify two distinct aspects, modes or degrees of manifestation of one Reality. The conception Matter excludes the conception Spirit, and *vice versa*. The absolute essence of things is unalterable; it only appears to change as one regards it in different ways or in varying lights.

Spirit is not an entity or substance existing apart from matter, concealed from view, waiting to be revealed to mortals at death. On the contrary, it is ever-present Reality, independent of time or space — not a reality, or a particular kind of reality, but Reality itself; the absolute, ideal Principle or Essence of things, about which all conceivable qualities and attributes are predicable; unalterable, formless, undifferentiated, unconditioned; neither describable nor comprehensible, but simply appreciable. By many the spiritual realm is conceived to be a sort of extension of, or adjunct to, the material. They look forward to the time when it shall be disclosed to them as if by magic. But it is only through cultivation of the spiritual faculty that Spirit can be made to appear, and this factor of experience does not depend on time or space. It is futile to search for Spirit within the domain of objective experience; it must be approached subjectively. "Flesh and blood" cannot reveal it to us, only the "Father which is in heaven"; *i. e.*, Spirit itself. Jesus said, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." He spoke to the multitude in parables, lest they should mistake the letter or form (objective characteristics) of his teaching for its spirit. The few who possessed this spiritual consciousness were able to discern its inner meaning; but the great majority, blinded by tradition or intellectual bias—conditions which always preclude the possibility of recognizing a higher plane that the intellect cannot invade—failed to grasp their intent. Whenever we try to apprehend the Absolute Principle of things, Spirit, with the intellect, we see it indefinitely extended in time or space, differentiated in endless numbers, relations, forms—just as by refraction and reflection light, although indefinable and indescribable in its homogeneous aspect, is resolved into an infinite number of diffused rays; and in this heterogeneous aspect it displays a world of endlessly changing hues. Yet that principle which is the source of these varied phenomena remains all the while unaltered, regardless of the way we chance to perceive its effects. It is not light, but our manner of observing



it, that changes. One person may possess a normally sensitive vision, while another is color-blind or even blind; but it is only the effects perceived that vary, and not in its ultimate essence that which is perceived. The existence of these discrepancies in impressions received must be accounted for by the observer's viewpoint, or the conditions under which his experiments are made. We see outwardly just what we are inwardly conditioned to see by reason of the status of our own consciousness; and if we would see otherwise, it must primarily be through the cultivation of a different quality or degree of consciousness, rather than through the substitution of different external conditions. In the last analysis the suggestion that leads to a change of view must operate from within; the viewpoint must be altered. Inasmuch as one's own consciousness is the prime factor in the creation of his outer world, if he would live in one superior to that which he now enjoys, he must set about transforming his consciousness; and it matters not how radical the change in his viewpoint may be, it will effect a corresponding regeneration of his outer world, as surely as the image in the mirror corresponds to the figure of the body that stands before it. His attention, then, should not be directed, primarily, toward changing those specific objects and circumstances he may have imagined to have an absolute existence outside him, but to transforming his inward life or consciousness, thus preparing the way for an outward change.

This is quite the reverse of what most men are accustomed to regard the true order of things. The ordinary type of mind grows confused and bewildered in trying to find out what is real, either through the senses or the intellect — faculties which are but mediums of interpretation — and finally jumps at erroneous conclusions, mistaking its own imperfect thoughts about the truth for Truth itself. Truth may be formulated intellectually, as the spiritual idea of the poet is cast into forms of verse symbolizing or suggesting to appreciative minds the Reality known to the poet himself, and which must be discerned

by the reader as well, in the last analysis, through the intuitive faculty. Spirit can no more be perceived through the intellect than can the stars through the microscope. Many pursue the quest for spiritual truth with the intellect, until it leads them to agnosticism or pessimism; others, in whom the discriminative faculty is less keenly developed, are satisfied with such aspects of Truth as the intellect is able to reveal, and imagine these transient, kaleidoscopic reflections of the real to be Reality itself. But "spiritual things are spiritually discerned." The intellect can neither perceive what lies above its own plane, nor recognize the existence of such a plane.

Therefore learning of the conventional description—intellectual knowledge, observations concerning Truth—may, and frequently does, preclude the discernment of Truth itself, by preoccupying the entire mental horizon, so as to obscure the higher vision, causing the attention to be so constantly and persistently centred in the lower channels of perception that, through practical neglect of the higher, soul-faculty, its very existence is often either forgotten or denied. Conventional standards of education as yet take comparatively little account of this highest of human faculties, and the incomparable benefits to be derived from its further development. The material consciousness is cultivated and freely propagates itself, while the spiritual starves for lack of suitable nourishment—ideals upon which to feed. But first of all we must become aware of the existence of a spiritual faculty as a positive certainty, and not as a mere vague, shadowy possibility.

Intuition is the supreme court of our being, from the decisions of which no appeal can be made. However, for him who first discerns Truth, Reality, Spirit intuitively, the intellect and the senses furnish invaluable sidelights, which add immeasurably to its appreciation. Their echoes are like the overtones or harmonics accompanying the fundamental tone heard when any string of a musical instrument is struck or caused to vibrate. No man in whose consciousness the light of Truth is

entirely diffused, by the refracting power of the intellect, into separate beliefs, definite periods, or external events, can appreciate Spirit. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

When one's ear becomes attuned to certain discordant notes in the symphony of life, or his eye over-sensitive to certain distasteful colors from constant emphasis of them in their separateness, the ideal unity of life known through the spiritual consciousness alone, fades away, so that in time he comes to realize nothing but a narrow, disjointed, material existence. After awhile, by dwelling perpetually on the phenomenal aspects of life, he grows to perceive only a monotonous repetition of certain coarser vibrations; his spiritual sight and hearing become continually duller, and the distinguishable vibrations coarser, until he finds himself in the silence of that "outer darkness" which is death.

Only as one's consciousness expands sufficiently to enable him to appreciate Reality itself, does he understand the true meaning of experiences that come to him, seemingly at random, from without; and not until divested of the fictitious values that time and space have endowed them with, are they visible in their true light.

The purely spiritual consciousness is both broad and deep, extending beyond the personal sphere, and furnishing the common basis of all separate, superficial experiences that arise in one's life. He who realizes this type of consciousness may, through it, reach another's thought fundamentally enough to suggest to him ideas that, if accepted and acted upon until they penetrate into the more superficial channels of expression, will transform his whole outward appearance. If, as in the case of Jesus, one's consciousness be profound enough, its regenerating power may be made manifest instantaneously, providing a sufficient degree of receptivity exists in the mind of the subject toward whom it is exerted. Such is the possibility of consciousness when one becomes fully awakened to the power behind his



own and other finite lives ; and today many are rapidly approaching this point in their actual experience.

Out of this cosmic, spiritual substratum, this fundamental type of consciousness, arises a multitude of individualized experiences, just as myriads of leaves, each endowed with peculiar characteristics of its own, spring from a common source, the life of the tree. The forms through which this personal aspect of consciousness is expressed appear and disappear ; but deeply hidden beneath every superficial expression lies the eternal, spiritual consciousness, ever the same, the ground of immortality in every human being. To realize immortality is the supreme desire of every man—the end toward which his hopes tend, however mistaken he may be in regard to its real significance and the method of its attainment. In the last analysis, the incentive to live, is the desire to escape from the harassing conditions of the lower planes to some higher state of consciousness which will afford peace and satisfaction to the soul.

When one realizes this permanent, eternal type of consciousness which enables him to become aware of a deep, spiritual identity persisting through all reverses—such as loss of property or friends, and even the dissolution of the body—he possesses a clear title to immortality ; for by steadfastly identifying one's self with that element in consciousness which is able to survive the death of the body, because it transcends all conditions of time and space, viz., spiritual Principle, life and immortality are brought to light. Conditions change, forms perish, beliefs disappear ; nothing is stable on the sensuous or the intellectual planes. By allying one's *Self* and one's hope of perpetual existence with things, events or beliefs—transient factors of experience, uncertain phases of life—by building of "wood, hay or stubble," one must, sooner or later, suffer the loss of what he has built ; and even though he be "saved as by fire," it will be naked, forlorn and destitute of that spiritual garment which must be woven, stitch by stitch, through experience in the highest realm of consciousness.

I, who must be saved because I cling with my mind  
To the same, same self, same love, same God ; ay, what was shall be.  
— *Browning's "Abt Vogler."*

Every man who desires to know the Truth, Reality, Spirit, must assume the spiritual standpoint, without waiting to find it through an intellectual process of reasoning ; for it cannot be revealed by any such method, lying, as it does, on an entirely different plane. He must once for all discard that method, and cease trying to discover it in that way. When one cultivates the intuitive faculty, feeds it and lives according to its affirmations, its efficiency increases like the grain of mustard seed, which grows into a mighty tree. When one looks steadfastly spiritward, Spirit begins to come into evidence, and the spiritual consciousness to displace the material. When the invalid, looking at life for the first time, perhaps, from its true, or spiritual centre, declares "I am well," he is only asserting the supremacy of Spirit, allying his life with the eternal element in consciousness. It may sound strange at first, but it is none the less the deepest truth he has ever given utterance to ; and the verbal expression, if persisted in, will be but the antecedent of a more general and lasting physical expression. One should perpetually cultivate the timeless, spaceless life, wherein he sees all things, but not as dependent on conditions of time and space. By assuming the ideal element in life, appropriating it, building it into his thought, he will find it in time to be the real.

As one must be familiar with the mathematical principle in order to be able to solve mathematical problems, so also must he first become clearly conscious of the spiritual Principle before the deeper, more vital problems of active life will solve themselves to the entire satisfaction of his reason.

Examples in arithmetic are worked out by means of figures, representing numbers whose relative values are definitely known ; but in algebra another class of problems is encountered, the solution of which, by reason of their more abstruse nature, demands the introduction of a new factor, viz., certain letters of the alphabet, used to denote unknown quantities.

Likewise in the deeper problems of life, arising out of the spiritual nature of man, it is often necessary to introduce the "X," symbolizing a spiritual factor unknown to the finite mind. This "X" is the element of Faith, "the assurance of [or the giving substance to] things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." In the practical affairs of life, it stands for a spiritual Reality, which we are unable to define in exact terms, although perfectly conscious of its existence. We are apt to overlook the intent of the first clause of this declaration of Paul. Faith is not alone "evidence," but is "substance" as well. In the spiritual consciousness lies the potency of the fulfilment of one's desires, not only subjectively but also objectively; for the subjective and objective factors in the case are blended together. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." To be actuated by this Spirit, is to be conscious of the presence in our lives of the essence of all that is real, the source from which all realization proceeds, the power by which all objective things are created, or brought forth into manifestation. In every instance where we reach the heart of life, the spiritual germ, the centre from which all expressive power issues, the outward transformation will be marked. The more direct the method, the more speedy and decisive will be the result. This was the position of Jesus, and the secret of his power over men and nature. He recognized in Spirit the basic Principle of all things. He perceived it directly, intuitively, by the inner, soul-sight, not through distorted and inverted intellectual images. His consciousness penetrated to the heart of expression, Spirit, causing morbid, spectral thoughts of suffering and disease in the sick and infirm to be undermined and displaced by the revitalizing, spiritual consciousness he was able to awaken.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



## HELPS TO RIGHT LIVING.

(WEDNESDAY CLASS.)

KATHARINE H. NEWCOMB, BOSTON.

### SILENCE.

You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me. You shall listen to all sides, and filter them from yourself.—*Walt Whitman.*

My first object in these Wednesday lessons is to make you think for yourselves. I am simply suggestive. You come to get your keynote for the week. I expect each one to think out much farther on various lines—to let his mind carry him into his own domain. We have varied interests and experiences, and one cannot do another's thinking with any profit or benefit to that other. All that we *can* be to another is simply suggestive. We are very apt to lean on another if we can. It is so much easier to do as another thinks best, and then if we are not satisfied we can blame the other. This is a great relief to some minds. They insist that you know much better than they do, and if you will only advise—and then if things go wrong they inform you at once that they felt all the time that they would; in fact that they knew much better than you in the first place.

Now let us learn to do our own thinking in the *little* things in life, and then we will be fitted for the larger responsibilities. It really is a habit with some to always ask of another what they had best do. It is an *indolent* state of mind. Do not look through the eyes of another—"listen," but "filter" all things from yourself. As you train the reasoning faculty it gives you greater confidence in yourself. It is the beginning of concentration, to gather these thoughts that flit from one subject to

another without any serious purpose. It is aiming for an intellectual centre. This, however, is only a stepping-stone, for the real destination or purpose is to gain our spiritual centre. But most of us come to that through the intellectual. We do not develop by the mental activity of another, any more than we are nourished by seeing another eat a good dinner.

The day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.—*Bible.*

I wish to talk about the disease of indecision. I think very few realize how much they live in the mental atmosphere of indecision. We will begin with those who, at last, think they will try metaphysics, and see what mind can do for them. They go to a professional healer, and their first exclamation is, "I don't know whether 'this' can help *me*, but I think I'll try it." They try *it*, and are much better. They read some on these lines; take a course or two of lessons, and steadily gain for awhile. Then they come to a point where they seem to stand still. They wonder if they ever will be well and happy. They have tried so faithfully, yet have come to this halting place.

Let us take for an illustration a man who starts on a pedestrian trip, his destination being the top of a certain mountain. He can travel several roads in reaching the foot of the mountain, and even after he begins to climb a little, can vary his path. But soon he gets to a point where he must either keep to the narrow trail, or be lost. If he appreciates mountain travel and realizes his danger, he will decide instantly to *keep to the trail*, and never diverge from it. He will never wander to one side or the other seeking for flowers, or be allured by some sparkling bit of tenderfoot gold. He will keep steadily on and on, always having in mind the *top* of the mountain. Now let us return to the patient and apply this to him. He has come to the place where he must decide—decide finally, forever, that his whole purpose is to gain spiritual unfoldment. Is he to wander to one side or the other, seeking causes in externals, the

victim of his indecision? Indecision is doubt. Have we any place for doubt when living in the spiritual side of our nature? Our text tells us "*in the valley of decision.*" You see that we are to *decide* in the valley, and *not* after we have started up the mountain. Decide when *in* your aches, pains and unhappiness, and not think that when you have overcome them, that then you will be happy and well. You must decide *in spite* of all inharmony, and then *stay decided*. Never think for a moment that you could possibly change your mind. "The day of the Lord"—which is the beginning of harmony within ourselves—"is *near*, the valley of decision." And is it not so? As soon as we *really* decide once for all to give up the personal self, when we do not reserve in the *slightest degree* our privilege to be selfish, then are we filled with a realization of our spiritual power, and no matter what comes, there is never any indecision in our minds. We have decided, we have made our choice. We are free to live in either a limited condition, like a bird with its wings clipped, or we can live in the unlimited reality, knowing that all power is ours, and that it is within as well as without. And as we make this atmosphere for ourselves, which comes as a *result* of decision, we find that we are becoming more and more *conscious* every day that we are not finite, but are Infinite in the truest sense.



I truly and permanently teach only what I have assimilated, only what I am: the rest is mere talk. Any one can collect a set of ideas and make them one's stock-in-trade through the remainder of one's life. But the genuine teacher is ever progressive; he does not borrow; he tells what life has meant for him individually. Oftentimes when we say we ought to do a thing, the appeal is merely that of habit or conventionality, and not a moving of conscience.



## THE IDEAL HEALER.

BY ELLEN M. DYER.

THERE are healers and healers in the New Thought today, and it is inevitable that the general public and those in special need should show a growing tendency to move carefully, discriminate and classify as experience brings wisdom.

A few years ago it was stated with unction by the eager promulgators of the movement that the consideration of personality must not enter into the question of who should heal, or to which of several available practitioners the one desiring help should apply. But after it had also been accepted, as a fact not to be questioned, that twelve lessons were the all-necessary equipment of the one who was to assume to guide living souls from bondage to freedom, the fruit began to give token of the manner of tree that produced it, and the first statement began to call for deeper soundings as to its basis in practical truth.

Some one has said that personality is "the divine thing in the world." It is, indeed, when regenerated and emptied of human obstruction, the channel of divine and impersonal truth to man. But the all-important point is that it be thus cleared and purified; for every feature and force therein is called upon to render service in this highest of earthly ministry.

What constitutes the ideal and practical healer? He has been a deep student both in heart and head, but now he is more—he has passed beyond study, so far as the work now put into his hands is concerned. Ever looking with head and heart toward experience and revelation, in his march onward, he is, nevertheless, in relation to the patient at his side, a spontaneous, living force, ever seeing more than he presents, and real-

izing more than he affirms. Saturated with love unspeakable, he radiates therefrom; but the radiation is yet less than the abundant possession. The student is lost sight of in the disciple, the disciple is merged in the seer and lover.

He gives not only his faith, his word, his love, but himself; and the measure of good received, however great, holds a still larger value as suggestion of the possibilities that are unfathomable. The patient is helped, healed, and infinitely more—his feet are put into the path that leads to self-help. Through the healer's recognition his own intuitions are aroused, and he is henceforth his own physician. The true and deepest healing, therefore, lies in the educative quality that it possesses rather than in the temporary cure.

No trick of method or intellectual acuteness makes the healer; it is his own intrinsic individuality, sincerely and unselfishly put forth. Nor is excess of phenomena needed to mark his steady progress from year to year; however, as flashlights of experience, these may here and there give glimpses of the background of power drawn upon. Nor is the healing a matter of occasional and spasmodic effort, but a largely unconscious and continuous progression in realization—an undeviating tendency in the direction of that habitual right thinking and loving that are to usher in the divine humanity. Hence it is never a task to be performed, but the impulsion of a great and inexhaustible love, that, having no burden of self to bear, knows no weariness of self. Not an exclusive or personal love is this deep impulse, but a single pulse-beat from the Mother-Heart of God, conscious that it beats only in responsive unison with the All, eliminating all suggestion of personal desire, eagerness or comparison.

In Goldsmith's *Village Preacher* of many years ago we read the prophecy of the Ideal Healer of today:

Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power,  
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;  
For other aims his heart had learned to prize,  
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.

Yet to the healer's view there are no wretched; he has already risen to the Mount of Beatitudes, where he sees that the greatest need is but the attractive point for the greatest blessedness.

And as a bird each fond endearment tries  
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,  
Allured to brighter fields, and led the way.

Independent of the creed of stereotyped statements, the dogma of established methods, his one fixed point is his own interior touch with his divinity, whence he floods his patient with the overflow of his latest and purest revelation of the moment. His patient is to him, for the time, the one only soul to be lifted up and illumined, his present and best opportunity for giving forth the healing power that is filling him. So does he attain to the "Great Ideal," and the world in its great need draws near to him because he has drawn near to God.



Faith is a necessity of life. Life is impossible without it. And the very first thing we do is to believe. "Thought may shake or strengthen faith: it cannot produce it. Is its origin in the will? No; good-will may favor it, ill-will may hinder it, but no one believes by will, and faith is not a duty—it is an instinct, for it precedes all outward instruction." As Count Tolstoi says: "If a man lives, he believes in something. If he did not believe that there is something to live for, he would not live. If he does not see and understand the unreality of the finite, he believes in the finite. If he sees that unreality, he must believe in the infinite. Without faith there is no life."



The best way to help another is by suggesting something that will take him out of self.



## REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.

SAYS one writer: "There are few subjects which have been more distorted by ignorance, more misunderstood and misrepresented, than death; and the fear it inspires is so general that to speak of it on ordinary occasions or in social gatherings is regarded as an offence against good breeding, and, so far from religion having conquered it, it is the conqueror of religion."

Martin Luther said in his writings: "It were a light and easy thing for a Christian to suffer and overcome death, if he only knew that it was not God's wrath." In other words, if men's minds were not corrupted by false teachings, they would not regard death with fear and trembling, as the majority now do.

A writer in *Galaxy*, some years ago, said it had so happened that he had seen many men and women die, including persons of all ages and conditions, cultivated and ignorant, orthodox and heterodox, and he confirmed the oft-repeated assertion that dying people lose their fear and dread the moment they give up their attachments to what they regard the things of this life, and nothing in the beyond that they are approaching seems to be of a nature to disturb them, but that they as a rule sink into a calm repose after becoming resigned to the seeming fact that they must go.

Says Dr. Spencer: "Beyond the mere distinctive desire to exist, the dread of death is a matter of education."

Says Dr. Madden, physician at the New York State Prison at Sing Sing: "My experience is that all persons when they come to die are in nearly the same condition of indifference. The time when they have the horrors is when they are afraid

they are going to be sick enough to die ; and *then* I do not think convicts dying in the prison are more horrified at the thought of death than other persons are."

The foregoing illustrates and proves that the common ideas of death, so-called, and the fears of what may come afterwards, are groundless. "Neither the intellectual, moral or affectional natures of man are changed by death. It is only a step in life, and the man himself, the spiritual man, all that constituted the man before death, so-called, is identically the same after death. He has not for a moment ceased to exist ; he has simply entered on another phase of existence, under more favorable circumstances to understand himself, and progress in understanding the facts of life and the truth and wisdom of being.



Probably a large part of the friction, and many of the diseases, moral and financial difficulties of daily life could be avoided if man were to learn the great lesson of *moderation*, or the avoidance of extremes ; if he would take as his motto, "Nothing to excess." In countless ways, and with a patient persistency which nothing could surpass, nature does her utmost to warn us when we are approaching the normal limit, beyond which lies danger, misery and insanity. Then she enforces her lesson by bringing upon us the reaction due to our own immoderate conduct. Yet we constantly disobey her mandates. Any one of these disobediences would teach us this secret of life's true economy ; namely, the avoidance of one-sidedness.



One thought I have — my ample creed,  
So deep it is and broad ;  
And equal to my every need,  
It is the thought of God.

## EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

## HEALING.

## III.

[CONTINUED FROM JUNE NUMBER.\*]

HERE the question arises, Does the healer really open the mind to an *outside* force which is then directed toward the patient, or is this force *resident* in the healer? Or, assuming that there is a definite suggestion given, or a thought transferred to the patient, does this thought simply quicken the dormant healing power in the patient? Probably many healers would maintain that power or life is actually absorbed from without by the healer, and also in the process of self-help. At any rate, a state of mind is aroused which it is desirable for the patient to receive the benefit of subconsciously. Whether there be definite thought transference, or simply the consciousness of concentrating power toward the patient, the result is evidently the same; that is, the thought probably does not travel. It is the motion or vibration which is transferred, probably through a substance finer than the ether in which our minds are bathed. And if the healing power is omnipresent there is no question of outside and inside, the essential being the establishment of a centre of activity for that power in the patient.

We may then consider the healing power as potentially resident in both healer and patient. It may even be in a state of tension in the patient — the natural tendency of the organism to right itself — the pain being a sign that this tendency is interfered with by wrong treatment, fear, nervousness, the effort

\* On account of omission in June number, we repeat a portion given in that issue.



to draw in and bear the pain, etc. The mental treatment, then, removes this opposition, and cooperates with nature by not only giving the mind a healthier direction, but hastening the activity of the healing power.

It is essential to remember, then, there is a soul or higher nature within craving expression, a latent ideal toward which the powers of our being are persistently striving. If the patient is unaware of this evolutionary process, this tendency toward the perfect, the power is resisted and confined, and suffering results. If one is undeveloped on the affectional side of one's nature, if the intellect is uncultivated, or if one is in need of physical exercise, then this undeveloped or one-sided region is the seat of creative activity. Nature is striving through us to realize a type, to actualize a rounded-out ideal. She is irresistibly persistent in this endeavor, and if she cannot make an impression upon us by gentle means she must resort to something vigorous or painful. There is, then, a sort of natural rhythm of development, like the steady rise and fall of the steamer over the waves of mid-ocean. Those who are well-rounded out move with it. Those who are unfinished in any particular meet it with resistance. The effort, therefore, both in helping another and in self-help, should be to cooperate with this natural process. This may be done by trying to picture this ideal. Dismiss the thought of yourself as you have been, and hold in mind this rounded-out ideal.

One cannot accomplish much at a time, nor become rounded out all at once. But take up one tendency after another, master it, and be content with *moderate* growth. It is the *straining* after ideals which is the bane of many sensitive minds. But it is not so much growth that we need as *realization*. Therefore there is no means of self-help more effectual than to settle down quietly into the living present. It may be assumed in every case of illness and of pain in yourself or in the one whom you wish to help that there is tension of some sort; there is a reaching out toward the future in fear or anxiety; there is a too

eager desire to accomplish ; there is worriment over financial matters, or a sort of nervous resignation to endure the pain. We are constantly wishing that some one might come or that something might happen ; and this constant discontent causes an equally constant waste of energy. Now if this strain can be taken off, the resistance to nature's forces will be removed.

Put yourself, then, *entirely* in the present, trustfully, restfully, calmly. You are an immortal soul, and have all eternity before you. Time is of no real consequence—it is simply a matter of mathematical convenience. Space, too, has little meaning for the soul. There is no place in the wide universe where there is more wisdom and power than here in this living present. The omniscient God is here, the source of all life and goodness. He is unlimited by space, unhampered by time. You are eternally a part of him and of his life. You stand individually for some aspect of wisdom and power which no other soul can represent as well. Your experience is a progressive awakening to the consciousness of that power, and with the discovery of greater power comes greater ability to express it. Peace, then. Trust and be receptive to that power. Do not try to grow, but let the soul expand. Let nature and the subconscious mind do their utmost for you, while you devote your conscious thought to realization of the divine presence, to ways and means of making that presence known among your fellow-men.

Nothing is more fundamental, more effectual than such an act of will or concentrated attention. Let the outer universe be as real as it may ; let the disease be a physical malady, if you will, the fact remains that all this is known only through *consciousness*, that we are really living a life of mind, and that it is the will which is the active cause or directive force. The life force behind all evolution is consciousness. It is consciousness fixed in a given direction which enables us to form habits, to learn an art or science. It is consciousness misled and misdirected which has built up the disease from which we wish to

be free; and without concerning ourselves with *how* we built it up, since we should thereby enter into and recall the conditions from which we wish to be free, consciousness must undo what it has done by seeking out a new and healthier direction.

This shifting of attention is very much the same in its effect as though one were to turn the body squarely around and walk in the opposite direction. The act of will is slight which causes the change, but it carries the whole activity of the being with it. Or it is like an absorbing story or play which holds the attention so that one forgets time, place and all else; the difference being this, that by choosing the thought of oneness with God and eternity you may make the changed state of mind permanent by opening the mind and receiving new life and power directly from the fountain head itself. The thought of oneness with God, the realization of the rounded-out ideal broadens the consciousness, lifts one to a wider realm, and this in a word is that which is needed above all else. For probably in all cases of illness there is a contraction in some part of the body, either in brain and nerves, or in nerves and muscles; the atoms are drawn too closely together, and there must be expansion both of mind and body. This is just what results from this elevation of thought to the plane of spiritual consciousness. It throws the atoms apart, the confined power has a chance to come forth, the nervous tension is removed, and gradually as the mind becomes peaceful and happy the entire physical system becomes open and free, in much the same way in which one is limbered up on a cold day by going into the sunlight.

But how, you ask, does this realization of the divine ideal and of oneness with God through spiritual concentration reach another person and cause a like expansion? Probably the best illustration of this process is that of the transfer of sound vibration. When two pianos are in adjoining rooms, if a note on one is struck the corresponding chord on the other will vibrate. Likewise in human speech. The will or desire on my part to communicate with you causes my ideas to take shape in language



which you understand, a process is set up in my brain, transmitted to the vocal chords, and thus by vibration to your ear, brain, and finally to your consciousness. And your understanding of what I say is precisely dependent on the attention which you give to it, the receptivity to it, and the sympathy of experience. If you have entered the silence and communed with God, you know what I mean. If not, my words convey little or nothing to you; for it is the experience or consciousness which counts, not the words.

Now in the healing process the communication is very much simplified, although still of a vibratory character. You are receptive, and need help; and I desire to help you. We sit down together and enter into sympathy mentally. I do not try to force my thought upon you, but you give me your attention. The sympathy between us has annihilated space; and as I turn aside from the outer world and rise to the plane of soul silence or divine communion, your mind consciously or subconsciously receives the benefit of my realization, through this sympathetic receptivity. You may feel nothing at the time, but a seed has been sown in the unconscious mind where it will germinate and do good. In other words, work has been done; the healing power has been directed to the contracted or tense centre, the particles have been driven farther apart; and this expansion brought about at the inmost centre is sure to bring about a change sooner or later of which you will be duly conscious.

There is much that is still mysterious in this process, for we do not yet know how the transition is made from thought to vibration and from mind to body. The essential after all is the knowledge that mind is fundamental, and that probably matter itself is ultimately psychic or conscious. It is not even necessary to blot out haunting mental pictures, nor reason away whims and fears. Sometimes, it is true, if one fairly faces a fear it may be easily mastered. There is a saying among the Sandwich Islanders that the warrior gains the power of every foe he conquers. But it is not well to fight one's mental states, but to turn posi-

tively away from them. See the better mental pictures of yourself as you ought to be, and these will efface the old.

The keynote to the entire process is to strike a new chord, to change the attention or will. It is all a question at last of where we shall place our allegiance. Shall we live in the consciousness of sensation, of self, in memory of the past, in trouble, fear, worry, in matter and circumstance? Or shall we dwell upon the end to be reached through all this process, the larger self, the spirit, the inner, the real or eternal? Shall we seek the kingdom of heaven that all else may come, or seek first *things*, hoping that the kingdom may be added? The mind is limited in power and must choose, for there is literally no room both for trouble and for trust. Either I am to look upon myself as all-important and try to have things circulate about *me*, or I am to regard the infinite as first and myself a part of it. To lose self that one may find it is in fact the very essence of healing; for invariably there is too great consciousness of self whenever there is illness and trouble.

You may reply that you know it, that you would rise above sensation if you could; but you have become lethargic, you have lost ambition, and seem unable to help yourself. Still the eternal truth remains, that if you wish to be better *you must make some effort*, you must break away. And when this higher consciousness comes — the intuition of life's wholeness, its beauty, its system and meaning — there comes with it a sense of contentment, of joy in existence which nothing can destroy, and heart, mind and body are healed by recognition of one's union with the spirit and love of God.



"If I were to live my life over," said an old man recently, "I would observe two conditions: (1) Be more moderate, (2) Think more; for I trace all my mistakes and troubles to haste and thoughtlessness."

## METAPHYSICAL CLUB.

201 Clarendon St., Opposite Trinity Church, Boston, Mass.

**ORGANIZED** to promote interest in, and the practice of, a true spiritual philosophy of life and health; — to develop the highest self-culture through right-thinking, as a means of bringing one's loftiest ideals into present realization; — to stimulate faith in, and study of, the higher nature of man in its relation to health and happiness; — to advance the intelligent and systematic treatment of disease by the mental method.

**HEADQUARTERS** for the Club, at the above address, are freely open to members, and to others interested in the movement, from 9 A. M. until 5 P. M., daily (except Sunday).

**LECTURES** will be given from November to May. Announcement later. Admission to non-members twenty-five cents.

**MEMBERSHIP** in the Club may be secured by the payment in advance of Three Dollars, which is the annual fee. All who sympathize with the purposes of the Club are cordially invited to join.

**THE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT** contains a constantly increasing list of books on Metaphysical and allied subjects, which will be loaned, subject to the library regulations. Contributions to the library will be gratefully received, and will aid in its efficiency and interest. Equitable arrangements will be made for sending books by mail, in which case the receiver will be required, to assume risks and pay all charges for transportation. Rates, 2 cents per day; 10 cents per week.

**THE BOOK DEPARTMENT.** — A large line of books, pamphlets, leaflets, etc., on Metaphysical subjects is kept constantly on hand. Any books not kept in stock will be procured and forwarded on receipt of retail price. The proceeds of these departments are used to further the work of the Club.

**INQUIRIES** and communications should be sent to the Secretary.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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ABSTRACT OF DISCOURSE BEFORE THE METAPHYSICAL CLUB, MARCH 22, 1898, BY REV. CHARLES G. AMES; SUBJECT, "PHYSICS AND METAPHYSICS."

The principal point emphasized was the relation between soul and body, and the dependence of the one upon the other for expression. We fail to realize that the world and the soul are both part of the same system, the same forces ruling both, with no sharp definition between; and the speaker pled for a more positive recognition of the physical in its perfect relation to the metaphysical. As it is only through the physical senses we can know the spiritual, to better understand physical science is, then, simply perfecting the channel.

It is spirit in earthen vessels, scripture in common things, soul in body, but always the necessity for the one as the complement to the other. He spoke of language as "the illumination of education," and dwelt upon the value of suggestions from the whole natural world, and familiarity with words of pure and holy significance, as a means of communication with the highest. Receptivity, or docility, is a large part of the wisdom of existence. Some have soared too high in the realms of metaphysics, forgetting the ever-existing interdependence, thereby failing in the true adjustment necessary to meet the experiences of daily life with wise discretion, and we therefore distrust all tendencies which might unfit us for this.

Mr. Ames closed by saying that "he had in the past urged his people to attend to religion, now he told them to attend religiously wherever they found themselves."



## THE JACKSON LECTURES.

SEASON OF 1898.

JACKSON, N. H.

Admittance to the lectures will be free, and every one will be welcome. A program of the various topics and lectures will be issued in due season.

The third season will open Tuesday, July 26, and end Saturday, Sept. 3. Any further information will be furnished by the Secretary,

WARREN A. RODMAN,  
201 CLARENDON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

## BOOK NOTES.

VICTOR SERENUS. By HENRY WOOD. 502 pp. \$1.50. Lee & Shepard, Boston, Mass.

The scene of this story is Palestine and Rome in the time of Paul. The book narrates the early history of the great Apostle, his persecution of the Jews, conversion, imprisonment, trial and death. In the character of Victor Serenus, Mr. Wood has portrayed the life of a follower of Jesus of the gentler and more broadly philosophical type. The book throughout is an exposition of the "New Faith," as Mr. Wood has chosen to call it, and abounds in metaphysical and spiritually helpful discussions. It lays special stress upon the more practical aspects of the new gospel, its application to disease, its relation to the future life and the soul. The author has drawn the historical pictures with great care, and has succeeded in giving to the book an admirable historical atmosphere. In style it shows a distinct advance over Mr. Wood's former books, and the skilfully worked-out plot is of sufficient interest and fidelity to life to keep the didactic element from assuming too great importance. It may be taken not only as an exposition of Mr. Wood's own philosophy, but also of our modern "New Thought." As such it is emphatically Mr. Wood's best book, for it presents the doctrine in its most attractive and acceptable form. We heartily recommend it not only for its historical value as an able account of the wonderful life of Paul, but as an instructive story and a stimulating exposition of faith. Whatever defects it may have as a portrayal of human life, are more than compensated for by its helpful doctrine; and we recommend it especially to all who are seeking a common-sense explanation of New Testament events, and all who are casting about for a more satisfactory teaching than the hard and fast doctrines of the church.

H. W. D.

# Book Department of THE METAPHYSICAL CLUB.

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